

Remarks

In the office action mailed on June 17, 2004, the examiner rejected claims 1, 2, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13, 18, 20, 23, 24, and 31 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,574,416 (Posa et al.). The examiner also rejected claims 14-17, 19, 21, 29, and 30 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Posa et al. and, in the case of claim 19, over Posa et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,650,826 (Hatta). Further, the examiner rejected claims 32-41 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Posa et al. or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Posa et al. Finally, the examiner objected to claims 3-6, 9, 11, 22, and 25-28 because they depend from rejected base claims, but the examiner indicated that these claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form, including all of the limitations of the base claims and any intervening claims.

In response, claims 1-41 have been canceled and replaced by a new set of claims. Therefore, only claims 42-64 are now pending in the application.

New independent claim 42 includes all limitations of original claims 1 and 9 (the limitation of claim 9 being reflected in step (d)). Since the examiner indicated that claim 9 was allowable, the applicant believes new claim 42 to be allowable. Claims 43-50 and 52 all depend from allowable claim 42. Claim 51 depends from allowable dependent claim 50. Since claims 43-52 are similar to dependent claims that appeared in the application as originally filed, no new search should be necessary.

New independent claim 53 includes all limitations of original claims 1, 2 and 3 (the limitations of claims 2 and 3 being reflected in steps (d) and (e)). Since the examiner indicated that claim 3 was allowable, the applicant believes new claim 53 to be allowable. Claims 54-56 all depend from either allowable claim 53 or from another dependent claim that in turn depends from allowable claim 53. Claims 54-56 are also similar to claims that appeared in the application as originally filed.

New independent claim 57 includes all the limitations of original claims 32 and 9 in the context of an apparatus claim (the limitation of claim 9 being reflected in the final element of claim 57). Since the examiner indicated that claim 9 was allowable, the applicant

believes new claim 57 to be allowable. Claims 58-62 all depend from either allowable claim 57 or from another dependent claim that in turn depends from allowable claim 57. Claims 58-62 are similar to claims that appeared in the application as originally filed.

New independent claim 63 includes all the limitations of original claims 38 and 9 in the context of an apparatus claim (the limitation of claim 9 being reflected in the final means clause of claim 63). Since the examiner indicated that claim 9 was allowable, the applicant believes new claim 63 to be allowable. Claim 64 depends from allowable claim 63 and is substantially similar to original claim 39.

This application is considered to be in condition for allowance, and reconsideration of the application is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

By Thomas M. Croft

Thomas M. Croft

Reg. Number 44,051

July 20, 2004
Fort Collins, CO 80528
(970) 898-4218